



OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE

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Subject: **WA Open Disclosure Policy: Communication and Disclosure Requirements for Health Professionals Working in Western Australia**

WA Health supports and adopts the procedures outlined in the [Australian Open Disclosure Framework](#) (the Framework) published by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. The Framework is designed to enable health service organisations and clinicians to communicate openly with patients and/or their nominated relatives/carers when health care does not go to plan.

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WA Open Disclosure Policy Statement

February 2015



TITLE: WA OPEN DISCLOSURE POLICY STATEMENT

1. BACKGROUND

WA Health is dedicated and committed to providing safe and high quality health care to all patients. However, despite the best intentions of our highly skilled and committed health professionals occasionally things go wrong. When a patient is harmed in a WA hospital, there is a professional and ethical responsibility on the part of health practitioners to communicate with the patient about the clinical incident that has occurred.

Open disclosure describes the way clinicians communicate with and support patients, and their family and carers, who have experienced harm during health care. Open disclosure is a patient right which is anchored in professional ethics, considered good clinical practice, and is part of the care continuum.

2. POLICY

WA Health's policy is to support and adopt the [Australian Open Disclosure Framework](#) (the Framework). This was developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care after national consultation with stakeholders including consumer, safety and quality and clinician groups, and State governments.

The Framework has been formally endorsed by Australian Health Ministers. It has also been endorsed by the following professional organisations:

- Australian College of Nursing
- Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists
- Royal Australian and New Zealand Colleges of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

The Framework is supported by the:

- Australasian College of Emergency Medicine
- Royal College of Pathologists of Australia.

3. DEFINITIONS

Refer to the Australian Open Disclosure Framework¹ at the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's website <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/open-disclosure/the-open-disclosure-framework/>

¹ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2013), *Australian Open Disclosure Framework*, ACSQHC, Sydney, pg 4. Available at <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications/australian-open-disclosure-framework/> Accessed 20/05/14

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Health Service Chief Executives

- Have an obligation to ensure all relevant staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Australian Open Disclosure Framework.

Health Service Organisations

- Will ensure that their policies, procedures and practices align with the key principles of the Australian Open Disclosure Framework.

All staff to whom this applies

- Will ensure they follow the principles and procedures outlined in the Australian Open Disclosure Framework.

5. COMPLIANCE

Health service organisations are required to comply with open disclosure as part of the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (Standard 1: Governance for Safety and Quality in Healthcare Organisations).

6. EVALUATION

Monitoring of compliance with this document is to be conducted through the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and the national accreditation scheme.

7. REFERENCES

The Australian Open Disclosure Framework is available at the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's website

- <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/open-disclosure/the-open-disclosure-framework/>

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Medical Indemnity in Western Australia

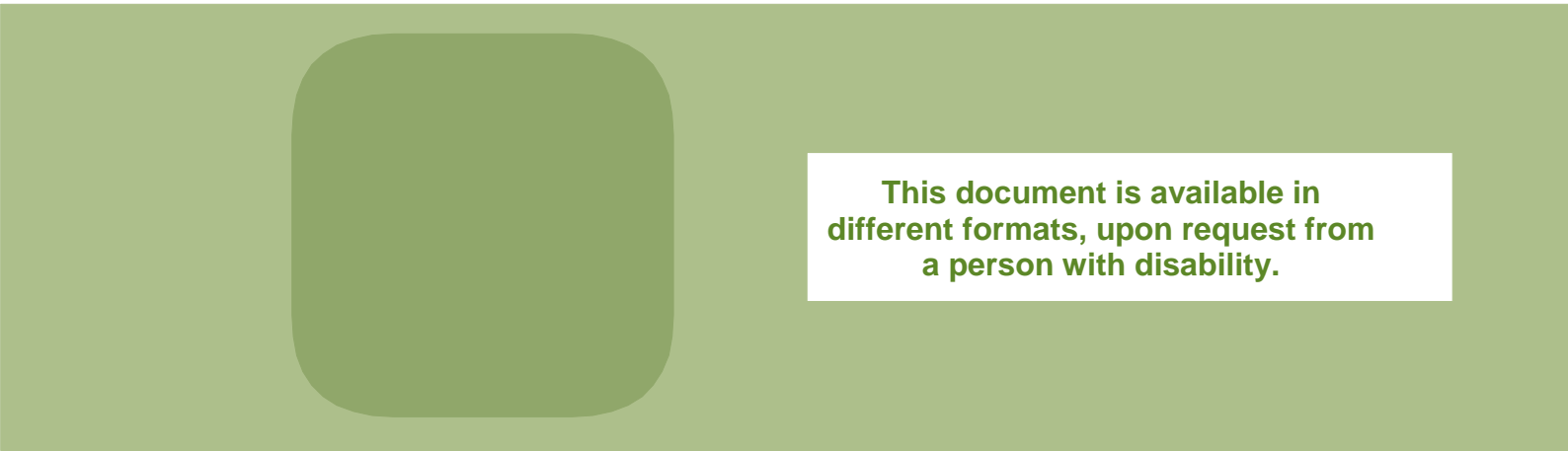
- For more information about the contractual medical indemnity scheme available to medical practitioners working in the Western Australian public sector health system, refer to <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/indemnity/home/index.cfm>

Clinical Incident Management in Western Australia

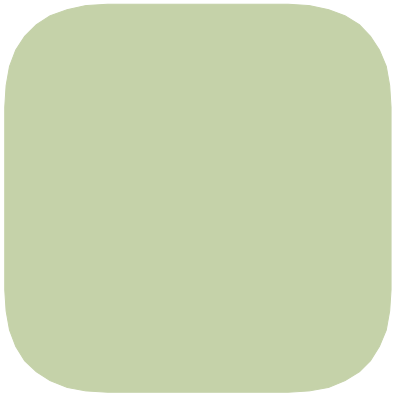
- Clinical Incident Management Policy and Clinical Incident Management System (Datix CIMS)
http://www.safetyandquality.health.wa.gov.au/clinical_incident_man/aims.cfm

Australian Accreditation Scheme and the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards in Western Australia

- Operational Directive on the implementation of the Australian Health Service Safety and Quality Accreditation Scheme and the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards in WA
http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/circular.cfm?Circ_ID=12920



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